

A
SERMON
Preach'd on the
Second of SEPTEMBER,
BEING THE
Fast for the Fire of London,
AT THE
Cathedral Church of St PAUL's,
Before the Right Honourable the
LORD-MAYOR,
ALDERMEN, and Citizens of London.

By W. SHERLOCK, D.D. Dean of St. Paul's, Master
of the Temple, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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A

S E R M O N

Preached on the
Second Sabbath in November
and fit for the Use of Towns or
Festivals.

BY THE

Rev'd Mr. CHAPLAIN OF THE
ARMED FORCES, AND
Author of several other
Works, now Officer of the Royal
Army.

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MICAH VI. 9.

*The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and
the man of wisdom shall see thy name.
Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed
it.*

WHEN the State of this World is happy and prosperous, it is no wonder to see men indulge themselves in Ease and Luxury, forget God, or grow careless and formal in Religion. For though it might reasonably be expected that happy Creatures, who rejoice in the Blessings of Heaven, should be very devout Worshippers of that God from whose Bounty and Goodness they receive all; yet Human Nature in this degenerate state is very fond of sensual Pleasures: And when an easy and plentiful Fortune puts it into mens power to enjoy as much of this World as they will, there are but very few who can set bounds to their Enjoyments, and taste the Pleasures of this Life, without taking large and intoxicating Draughts of it;

A Sermon preach'd at St. Paul's,

and this sensualizes mens minds; and *a carnal mind is enmity against God*; saith unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

Never any People had more sensible demonstrations of the Power and Presence of God amongst them, and his particular Care of them, than the *Israelites* had; and yet Moses tells us in his Prophetick Hymn, *Jesurun waxed fat, and kick-ed; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick; thou art covered with fatness*; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation, 32. Deut. 15. And thus God complains, Isa. 2, 3. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. And as much as we may despise and abhor the Ingratitude of the Jews, this is the general state of Mankind; and we may find too many Examples of it in all Times and Nations.

But it seems much more unaccountable, That when the judgments of God are abroad in the world, the inhabitants thereof should not learn righteousness: Because Judgments are apt to awaken men, and make them consider. When God speaks in Thunder and Lightning, those must be deaf indeed, who will not hear. This is the merciful design

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design of Providence in sending such terrible Judgments on the World, To make men consider their ways and their doings, and to convince them that there is a God that judgeth in the earth. For Judgments have a Voice, had we but Ears to hear: They proclaim the Power and the Majesty of God; a terrible Majesty, and irresistible Power; they scourge and they threaten Sinners, and call for Weeping, and Mourning, and Fasting: And how unthankful soever the *jews* were to God for his great Mercies and Deliverances, yet they were not so insensible of his Judgments: *When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned and enquired early after God, and remembred that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer,* 78. Psal.

34, 35.

This we are exhorted to in my Text, *To bear the rod, and who hath appointed it:* To consider for what reason those Evils which we at any time suffer, are come upon us, and what God intends by the Rod; which is the only way to grow better by our Afflictions, and to prevail with God in great Pity and Compassion to remove them.

But this is the great difficulty; Who shall reveal this Secret to us? How shall we distinguish between the Corrections of God, and the Wickedness of Men? How shall we understand the Language of the Rod, and to whom it speaks, for

for what Sins it strikes, and who are those *Achans* that are the Troublers of our *Israel*, and what God expects from us in such Cases?

I shall briefly explain these things to you, and Apply it to the present Occasion.

But I must premise, That I only address my self now to those who believe a God and a Providence; and that God hath revealed his Will and the Rule of his Providence in the Holy Scriptures. As for Atheists and Infidels, who have neither Eyes nor Ears, they can only feel the Rod like Bruits, not hear its Voice like Men: Though *the Lord's voice crieth unto the city, it is only the men of wisdom that see his name.*

Now as for those who believe a God and the Holy Scriptures, there are two very plain Interpreters of God's Judgments; *Natural Conscience, and the Word of God.* For the Judgments of God have not an Articulate Voice to acquaint us in plain and express words, upon what Errand they come; but they are Signs which speak by an Interpreter; and if we carefully attend to the Dictates of Natural Conscience, and to the Word of God, we cannot mistake their meaning.

1. As first, No man who attends either to the Dictates of Natural Conscience, or to the Word of God, can doubt *who it is that hath appointed the rod:* This is the first and most natural question of all;

all ; and yet a great many who profess to believe a God and a Providence, seem not well satisfied in this Point : They allow that some Judgments are the Hand of God, but are not willing to grant this of all ; especially when they see what the immediate and visible Causes of such Sufferings are.

Some of the greatest Evils which either Private Men or Publick Societies suffer, are manifestly owing to the Injustice and Wickedness of men ; and they can no more believe that it is the Will and Appointment of God, that they should suffer such Evils, than that it is the Will of God that others should do them : And all such Rods as are not appointed by God, can teach us nothing but the Wickedness of those by whom we suffer ; for if God has not sent them, they can bring us no Message from God. And yet most men are in some degree infected with this disease : We suffer many Evils which we are not willing to ascribe to God, and then we learn nothing from them but a little Worldly Policy and Prudence, to take better care of our selves and our Affairs, to be jealous and distrustful of men ; or it may be, to watch our Opportunities to revenge the Injuries we suffer, and to return them with Interest : And yet we profess to believe a Providence ; though it were as honourable to God to deny his Providence, as to deny

his Sovereign Disposal and Government of all Events ; or rather, they are both an equal Reproach to him. For a Providence which does not take care of Creatures, is little worth ; and we cannot say that God takes care of his Creatures, if any Evil befalls them without his Will and Appointment.

But Natural Conscience sees the Hand of God in all the Evils we suffer : Whatever the visible and immediate Causes and Instruments of our Sufferings are, a guilty Conscience takes notice of the Divine Vengeance ; the Terrors of God take hold upon him, and he trembles before his Judge, though he do not see him ; he is afraid of God, when he feels only the Hands of men. And what is the meaning of this ? What is the Language of these guilty Fears, but that whatever the Rod be that strikes, it is moved and directed by a Divine Hand ; that the Wickedness and Injustice, the Wrath and Fury of Men, is no other than the Vengeance of God ? For why should the Evils we suffer from men so terrify a guilty Conscience, had we not a Natural Persuasion, That all these Evils are sent by God, who-ever are the Instruments of them ?

Thus it is natural in all such cases to fly to God for help. Atheists themselves cannot wholly prevent this ; but when they are surprized with any sudden

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Sudden Dangers, Nature is too quick and too powerful for their Philosophy, and surprises them into an acknowledgment of God and a Providence, which they must do Penance for when their Fright is over. Sinners who forget God in Prosperity, fly to him in their Distress; *remember that God is their rock, and the high God their Redeemer.* And if this be a Natural Acknowledgment of Providence, as it certainly is, it owns the Hand of God in our Sufferings, as well as his Power to save; for both equally belong to the Supreme and Sovereign Lord of the World; and it is not merely his Power to help, which makes Sinners fly to God in their distress, but a sense of his Anger in what they suffer: They do not fly to God as men do to a powerful Patron, but as Criminals do to the Mercy of a provok'd Father or Prince: When they fly to God, it is to implore his Mercy as humble Penitents, to appease his Anger, that he may remove his Judgments; and when we fly to the Mercies of God to remove the Rod, it is an acknowledgment that it is he that strikes, as well as he alone that can save.

And that Conscience judges right in all this, however some men may attribute it to a Superstitious Education, is evident from Scripture, which expressly tells us, *That God doth whatsoever*

pleaseth him both in heaven and in earth. That none can stay his hand, or resist his will, or say unto him, What doest thou? That there is no evil in the city, which the Lord hath not done. If Job be stript of all his large Possessions in a day, it is the Lord that gave, and the Lord that taketh away. If the mighty King of Assyria invade Israel, and lay waste their Cities and Countrey, he is the rod of God's anger, and the staff in his hand is his indignation, 10. Isa. 5, 6. Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, but God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another, 75. Psal. 7, 8. This shews us, that whatever our Sufferings are, it is God that appoints the Rod, and then it must nearly concern us, ^{to} dly. To hear the Rod, what and to whom it speaks. Now in this case also, Conscience and the Word of God are the best Interpreters of God's Judgments. The Rod teacheth another way, but teacheth the same thing that Conscience and Scripture teach us; that is, it proclaims aloud the Evil of Sin, and God's Anger and Displeasure against it, and calls us to Repentance, and Reformation of our Lives.

When the Judgments of God are upon us, Conscience knows their Errand, and calls all our sins to remembrance, and sets them in order before us. Nothing but Guilt makes us afraid of God;

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God; and how quiet and secure soever Sinners are at other times, the Judgments of God will awaken their guilty Fears; and if men will hearken to the Voice of an awaken'd Conscience, it will certainly tell them why God strikes; and we cannot take a safer course, than to reform those Sins of which our Consciences then accuse us.

All the Threatnings of Scripture are against Sin, and all the Judgments there recorded, especially Publick and National Judgments, were inflicted for the Punishment of Sin; and these are to be our Examples, as they are the standing Rules and Measures of Providence. God never punishes but for Sin, though he may exercise particular good men with difficult Trials; and therefore when bad men and a wicked Nation suffer, they may certainly know the Cause; they have sinned, and God is angry, and summons them to Repentance; *for this is the fruit of all, to take away sin.* The Voice of Judgments is the same with the Voice of Conscience, and the Voice of God's Prophets; *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow;* 1. Isa. 16, 17.

This is plain enough, and sufficiently known, if it were but sufficiently laid to heart; and this is

is all that we are concerned to know of the Judgments of God. The secret and hidden Designs of Providence, which many times surprize the World with unexpected Events, are the Care of God, and belong not to us, till the Scene opens, and we see what part is allotted us in it. Whatever God be a-doing, we have nothing to do but to amend our Lives, which will remove the Scourge from us, and entitle us to the Care and Protection of Providence. Whereas to busy ourselves with Politick or Prophetick Guesses at unknown Events, to paint our Imaginations with black and frightful, or with gay and charming Scenes of things, as desponding Fears, or sanguine Hopes inspire the Prophet, can do us no good, but may do a great deal of hurt to ourselves and the World. This is not the Voice of the Rod, which makes no new Revelations to us, but only awakens the Convictions of Conscience, and enforces the Reproofs and Threatnings of the Word, with such sensible and smarting Proofs of the Evil of Sin, and God's Anger against it, as will make all men consider, who have not lost their Senses; and many times restore Sense and Understanding to those who had lost them.

But this to some men will seem a very dull Account of God's Judgments, which will neither gratify

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gratify their Curiosity nor ill Nature; nor, which they think worse, leave them any excuse to palliate their Hypocrisy.

The Judgments of God declare God's Anger against Sin, and call us to Repentance: This men will own, but do not like to hear, it express'd in such general Terms, as if when God sends his Judgments amongst us, he were angry with us for all our sins, and called us to repent of them all: This they think hard, that they must part with all their Sins, to remove these Judgments; nay, this they think can't be the Truth of the Case, because the World is always very wicked, and yet the Judgments of God are not always abroad in the World: And therefore they suppose, that when God does execute Judgments, it is not Sin in general, but some particular Sins, which so highly provoke him; and could they learn what they are, and reform them, they might see happy Days again: And this sets men at liberty to favour what Sins they please, to reproach and accuse each other, and to charge all the Evils and Calamities they suffer upon one another, without thinking of reforming themselves.

Thus to be sure it always is, when there are differing Parties and Factions in a Nation, who judge very differently of Good and Evil: They will all confess they are great Sinners; and, it may be,

be, too many of all Parties are guilty of the same Sins; but those Sins which are common to them all, must pass for nothing, because so far they are all agreed. But then there are peculiar Party-Sins, which every Party dislikes in each other; and what they dislike, they conclude God dislikes too; and to these they attribute all the Evils they suffer: As if the Judgments of God were not to reform the World, but to decide some Party-Quarrels, which will never be decided this way, when every Party will expound Judgments in favour of themselves.

But all men see that this is to judge by a false and partial Rule: This is neither Conscience nor Scripture; for Conscience equally condemns all Sin, and so does the Scripture too. I grant, tho there is always a great deal of Wickedness committed in the World, God does not always inflict Publick Judgments, which are commonly executed when Wickedness and Impiety is grown publick too; when publick Government is remiss in punishing Wickedness, or the Numbers and Power of Sinners are grown too great for the Correction of Publick Justice: But we shall always find in Scripture, that when God did inflict Publick Judgments, he called for a general Repentance and Reformation; and if this were not so, no man could understand the Voice of the Rod without

out a Spirit of Prophecy. But this deserves a more particular Consideration, both with respect to those Sins for which God most commonly sends his Judgments, when he sees fit to execute a Publick Vengeance; and the necessity of an universal Reformation, when the Judgments of God are upon us.

1. The most general account the Scripture gives us of Publick Judgments, is an universal Corruption of Manners. Thus the Prophet describes the state of the Jewish Church, when God threatened his Judgments against them: *An sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel, they are gone away backward.* And the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment, 1. Isa. 4, 5, 6. And in verse 10. he calls them, *The rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrah.* When Wickedness is grown universal, and hath infected all Ranks and Orders of men, such a Nation is ripe for Judgment; but it adds greatly to the Guilt and Provocation, when men are not contented to be wicked, without bidding open

defiance to God and to all Religion. *Wo unto them who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with cart-ropes.* Who deride all the Threatnings of God, and even dare his Power and Justice: *That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh, and come, that we may know it.* Who mock at the differences of Good and Evil, and value the Reputation of their Wit and Philosophy too much to be cheated with such empty Names. *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* *Wo unto them that are wise in their eyes, and prudent in their own sight:* Who having first destroyed the eternal and essential differences of Good and Evil, change their Names too at pleasure, and think themselves the only Wise Men in the world for doing so. This takes off all Restraints, and gives the Reins to their Lusts, and they live just as they believe, without making any difference between Good and Evil. *Wo unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;* who justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust, because

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cause they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel, 5. Isa. 18, &c. The like account we find in the other Prophets. And when the state of a Church and Nation is so corrupt, we need not enquire for what particular Sins God strikes; but yet there were some Sins which God expressed a severer Indignation against, and seldom delayed to punish; such as their Idolatry, and Contempt of the God of *Israel*, of his Word and Prophets; a Prophanation of his Worship; Atheistical Notions of Providence, and of Good and Evil; or their abominable Hypocrisy, in committing all the Lewdness and Villanies which men could commit, and sheltering themselves in an external Form and appearance of Religion, which the Prophets every where complain of. To these Causes is owing the universal Corruption of Manners; for it is impossible any Nation should so universally degenerate, till they have either corrupted their Religion by Superstition and Hypocrisy, or lost all sense of it; and therefore this calls for a speedy Vengeance.

As for what more particularly concerns the Christian Church, we may learn from the Epistles to the Seven Churches of *Asia*, what it is provokes our Lord either severely to punish us, or to remove the Gospel from us. The Church of

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Ephesus, though she had acquitted her self well in many things, yet *had left her first love*, had abated very much of her Zeal and Fervour for the Name and Religion of Christ. The Church of *Pergamus* is threatened for suffering those among her who taught Idolatrous Worship, and fleshly Lusts: And the Church of *Thyatira* likewise for suffering the Woman *Jezabel* to commit Fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols. The Church of *Sardis* made a glorious and pompous Profession of Religion, but without the true Life and Spirit of it; *she had a name to live, but was dead*: And the Church of *Laodicea* grew very cold and indifferent even in the Profession of Religion, as well as in the Practice of it; *she was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm*. All these our Saviour summons to Repentance, and threatens to punish or destroy them if they did not, *Chap. 2, and 3. of the Revelations.*

The Application of all this to our selves is so obvious, that I need not multiply words about it: We are that very Nation wherein all these Evils meet; it is hard to name any Vice which is not openly committed amongst us without Fear or Shame: Nay, things are come to that pass, that to be a modest Sinner, to boggle at any Wickedness, or to blush at it, is as great a Re-proach as to be Virtuous: And though some men

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are ashamed to own themselves Atheists, yet to believe in Christ, and to own any Reveal'd Religion, or to talk seriously of Providence, of God's governing the World, and punishing Cities and Nations for their Wickedness, is thought a Jeſt; and I wish it were a Jeſt only among vile and mean People, of no Fortune or Education; whereas we often see that their Condition makes them modest, and untaught Nature teaches them better, till they are corrupted by the Examples of Men of Wit and Figure in the World. And as for those who pretend to Religion, it is a very melancholy Prospect, to observe how little of the true Life and Spirit of Christianity there is among them. There is indeed Noise, and Zeal, and Faction enough among some People, and that makes others as cold and indifferent: The Tempters of the Church of *Sardis* and *Laodicea*, the one that had a Name to live, but was dead, the other that was lukewarm, make much the greatest Parties among us; and the very best men, I fear, are too much inclined to the state of *Ephesus*, which had left her first Love, those great Passions and Ardors of Devotion which ought to inspire the Minds of Christians.

Let us then hear the Rod and tremble: See how God dealt with the *Jewish* Church for these Sins; see what our Lord hath done to the Churches

Churches of *Asia*; and though we cannot say what God will do to us, because we know not what wonderful Designs are in the Womb of Providence, yet we know what we do, and how God hath dealt with those who have done as we do; which is too just reason to fear that he will deal so by us too, unless we repent and reform, which they did not. For,

2dly. When the Judgments of God are upon us, the Reformation must be universal too: It concerns every man to reform himself; for a Nation can never be reformed, but by the Reformation of particular men, who make up the Nation; and therefore when we are summoned to Repentance, as the Judgments of God summon us all, every man must examine himself what he has to repent of, and reform himself. But yet there is great difference between a National and Personal Repentance and Reformation, and they serve very different Ends.

A Nation may be said to be reformed, and God may in great Mercy remove his Judgments, tho (what is never to be expected) every particular man do not repent and reform himself: But then such a National Reformation requires the Execution of Publick Justice against Publick Wickedness, to make Sin publickly infamous, and to teach the greatest and most powerful Sinners Modesty:

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desty: To banish, if not Sinners, yet Sin out of our Courts, and out of our Streets, and to make it once more seek for Night and Darkness for a Covering; that Virtue may no longer blush in Company, or need Apologies; nor Vice dare to brave it at Noon-day.

There has indeed of late been some Care taken by Publick Laws and Royal Proclamations, to punish the Prophanation of God's Name by accursed Oaths; but yet in most cases men may be as vile as they please, and as publickly so as they please, and little or no notice taken of them; nay, they may talk and write what they please against God and Religion, ridicule the History of *Moses*, and the Gospel of our Saviour, and the Mysteries of the Christian Faith, and gain Credit and Reputation by it. I hope there are not many Christian Nations in the World, which in so publick a manner permit these things. We have talk'd of Liberty of Conscience, and Reformation, to good purpose, if the only effect of it be a liberty of ridiculing the Christian Faith; which might make one suspect that all the Zeal some men have express'd against Popery, was at the bottom of it a Zeal for Atheism and Irreligion; which the Discipline of Popery, as bad a Religion as it is, would not endure; it is indeed well fitted to make Atheists and Infidels, but will

will make men have a care how they profess it. And it is to be feared, that this Scepticism, and Infidelity, and Contempt of Religion, will prove a Back-door to let in Popery again upon us.

But to leave these Thoughts with those whose proper Care and Businels it is ; whether a Nation will be reformed or not, it concerns every particular man to hear the Rod : The Judgments of God warn us of his Anger and Displeasure against Sin, that we may fly from the Wrath to come ; and we do not hear the Voice of the Rod, nor improve Judgments to their true end, if we do not so repent and reform, as to save our Souls ; and this to be sure must be a Personal and an Universal Reformation. And yet even with respect to present Judgments, a Personal Repentance and Reformation is of great use ; for when the Judgment is Publick and National, God many times makes a remarkable distinction between persons : *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with them, for they shall reap the fruit of their doings : Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given to him :* Which is spoke with respect to Publick Judgments, 3. Isa. 10, 11. Which is a sufficient Encouragement for particular men to repent, and reform their Lives, whatever others do.

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But it is time to apply what I have now dis-
coursed, to the Particular Occasion of this Day's
Solemnity; though possibly some may think
that this Application comes too late; it might
have been very seasonable One or Two and thir-
ty Years ago, while the Marks of this Terrible
Vengeance were fresh and visible; when the
Ruins of our Houses and Churches could only
tell us where *London* stood, and shew us its Fu-
neral Pile, where its Glory lay in the Dust: Whea-
so many Thousand Families felt the smart of their
Ruined Fortunes, and were either forc'd to be-
gin the World again, or sunk irrecoverably under
it. This Fiery Vengeance had a Voice then, and
a very Terrible Voice, enough to awaken the
most stupid and Lethargick Sinners. But when
we see our City rebuilt more beautiful than ever,
as the little poor Remains of the Old one wit-
ness: When our Riches and Glory are increased
beyond the Example of most former Ages, it
seems too late to lament over the Ashes and Rub-
bish of our Fired City, when there are no visible
Remains of these Ruins to move our Pity or Sor-
row: And indeed were this the only design of
this Annual Fast, it were high time to put an
end to it, or to turn it into a Thanksgiving Festi-
val: For it is in vain to expect, that after Three
and thirty Years, the return of this Day should

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revive and renew our Sorrows and Lamentations, when our Ruins are removed, our Losses repair'd, and those frightful Impressions which the sight of that devouring Fire made on us, forgot; and little left to put us in mind that our City was burnt, but the Inscription upon the Monument, and the sight of a New City, with the several Dates of its Resurrection; which must needs qualify all melancholy and sorrowful Reflections on what is so long past.

But though the Design of this Solemnity is not to represent and act over again a new doleful Scene of Horror, Confusion, and Amazement, which neither Nature nor Art can imitate, as we saw it once on this day, without such another amazing Sight, which God grant we may never see again till the General Conflagration; yet it is of great use to keep up a lively sense of such Judgments upon our Minds, which become the subject of Reason, of cool Thoughts, and wise Consideration, when the Terror and Frightfulness of them is over.

Judgments could never make a lasting Reformation in the World, were we concerned to remember them no longer than we feel their smart; but they are intended both for Punishment and Instruction; the Punishment ends with the smart, and that puts an end to all whining and tragical

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Complaints; but this alone is the discipline of Fools or Bruits: The Instruction is for Men, and this is to last as long as Memory, and Thought, and Reason last. What could the Fire of London teach us Thirty three Years ago, which it does not teach a wise man still? And what Thoughts and devout Passions became us then, which are not still on this Day the proper Exercise of our Devotion?

When we saw our Churches and Houses in Flames, when we saw those furious Torrents of Fire rowling down our Streets, and despising all the Opposition that Human Art or Strength could make, as if they had known by what a Divine and Irresistible Commission they acted; there were few men to be found, who did not express a great Fear and Reverence of the Power, and Justice, and terrible Majesty of God; who did not see and own the Hand of God, and the visible Tokens of his Displeasure, and begin in good earnest to think of reforming their Lives, and making their Peace with God, who had now taken the Rod into his own hand.

When we saw our Riches make to themselves Wings and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven; when we saw all our Pride and Glory, the Toil and Labour of our whole Lives, the Food and the Instruments of our Lusts, vanish into

Smoke and Dust, this effectually taught us the Uncertainty of all present things, and made us seriously consider what an ill state those were in, who had nothing to trust to but such vanishing Treasures ; and how reasonable our Saviour's Command is, *Not to lay up for our selves treasures on earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but to lay up for our selves treasures in heaven, which are not subject to such Casualties ; which will make us bear such Losses better when they come , and secure our eternal Interest.*

When men saw their Riches and Treasures vanish in a Cloud, it naturally made them consider how much of this they owed to the Poor, how much they had spent upon their Lusts, and how much they had unjustly got ; that is , how much of what God had taken from them was not their own, and how much they had abused the Gifts of God : Very Wise and Pious Thoughts, had they lasted ; and yet too plain to be missed by those who thought at all, when they saw these Lessons written in bright Characters of Fire.

Now was all this , do you think , calculated only for Sixty six ? Is not God the same still ? A Just and Righteous Judge , who is *angry with the wicked every day, though he do not every day bend his bow, and let fly his Arrows ; though he do*

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not every day make the earth tremble and quake, and the very foundations of the hills to shake, because he is angry ; though we do not every day see a smoke go out of his presence, and a consuming fire out of his mouth ; though he do not upon every Provocation appear in his Terrible Majesty , riding upon the Cherubins, and flying upon the wings of the wind. Methinks one such Example might serve us for some Ages , without expecting or desiring to be summoned again to Repentance by new Terrors. God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger , and of great kindness : He delights more to display his Glory in acts of Goodness and Bounty to his Creatures ; but Judgments are his strange work , which makes the signal Execution of them so very rare ; and the way to have them rare, is not to forget them, to learn Righteousness by the things which we have suffer'd ; to fear and tremble before that God who is so terrible in his doings towards the children of men.

But if the Fire of London was too long since to work upon our Fears at this distance, (though I confess I wonder how any man who saw that Sight, should ever forget it, or remember it without a just Awe and Reverence of God) ; but I say, if these Impressions of Fear and Terror are lost, let the Beauty and Glory of our New City, our Increasing Riches, our Flourishing Trade, our Ease
and

and Plenty, teach us to Love and Reverence, and Worship and Praise that God, who *in the midst of judgment hath remembred mercy*; who hath pluck'd us as a firebrand out of the fire, and hath not suffered our Enemies to triumph over us; *who said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground.* This is the way to perpetuate our Prosperity and Glory, if the Remembrance of past Judgments teaches us to Fear God, the sense of his present Mercies to Love him, and both to Obey him.

Which God of his Infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ: To Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever, Amen.

F I N I S.

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